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WHO SHALL WRITE OUR MILITARY HISTORY?

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THE INFANTRY JOURNAL.

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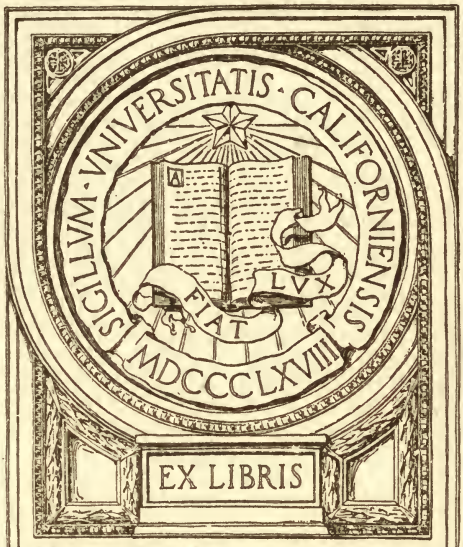

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WHO SHALL WRITE OUR MILITARY HISTORY?

Proceedings of a Conference on the Military History of the United States at the Twenty-Eighth Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association, Boston, Massachusetts, December 28, 1912

Dept of Military Science and Tactics. UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA. BERKELEY, CAL. APR 2 - 1913

Reprinted from the
INFANTRY JOURNAL
for January-February, 1913

UNIV OF CALIFORNIA

WASHINGTON, D. C.
THE UNITED STATES INFANTRY ASSOCIATION
1913

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Who Shall Write Our Military History?

Proceedings of a Conference on the Military History of the United States at the Twenty-Eighth Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association, Boston, Massachusetts, December 28, 1912.

NOTE.—*Through the interest of a number of the members of the American Historical Association, following Professor R. M. Johnston's introduction of the subject in the September–October* INFANTRY JOURNAL, *a conference, at the recent annual meeting of the Association in Boston and Cambridge, was devoted to the consideration of our military history, with particular reference to the means whereby at least a start may be made towards writing it in accordance with modern historical method. Upon the invitation of the American Historical Association the general staff of the Army was represented by Major James W. McAndrew, U. S. Army, under orders of the War Department, and by Captain George H. Shelton, 29th Infantry, and Captain Arthur L. Conger, 18th Infantry. Professor Albert Bushnell Hart, of Harvard, presided. Because of the importance of the subject and the discussion thereof, as well as the interest manifested by the attending members, the proceedings are reproduced here in practically complete form.*

THE MEETING was called to order at ten o'clock a. m. The chairman, Professor Hart, said:

This conference, ladies and gentlemen, has been called at the instance of several people, military and civilian, who feel that the science of military history has entered upon a new aspect, that the point of view towards military events and their relation to civil history and to the destinies of the nation has somewhat altered and that it is to the advantage of the American people that there should be a more intelligent understanding of military history, with a view to the protection of the nation in the future. Armies used to be destructive, and when they had gone through a campaign they left a wilderness behind them. The armies of to-day are defensive; their part in the present day in maintaining civilization is to prevent such fearful catastrophes as those which overtook all the elder civilizations down to one thousand years ago. We are here, further, to join in a conference between civilians and military men. I take it that the main purpose of this meeting is, by an exchange of views, to come upon some plan by which the furtherance of military history in the proper sense shall be facilitated. The civilian present who has most acquaintance with these data, these details, is my colleague, Professor R. M. Johnston, and I will ask him what he thinks may be done by such a conference and by the enlargement of such a science.

PROFESSOR JOHNSTON said:

Whatever my preferences may be, I feel I cannot evade at the outset a question that will undoubtedly present itself to many of those here present. The issue had better be met frankly, or else our position will remain uncertain and assailable. The study of military history is at the present moment under a cloud. There is more than a disposition to frown it down, to taboo it as

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being in some way antagonistic to the call of pacifism which holds the public ear. The study of war in the minds of many would make us accessories to putting back the clock of civilization.

Now what is the answer to that? Perhaps the best answer we could make on the present occasion would be to point to the President of the Association, Colonel Roosevelt. Who could prove more conclusively by his public acts that a man whose courage and fighting instincts are almost excessively developed may yet be the strongest and most rational advocate of peace? I allude, of course, to the treaty of Portsmouth. But there is perhaps a better reason. Are we not, as scholars, entitled to say to the pacifists: If you wish to put down war, surely you should wish to ascertain what are the facts of war, otherwise how can you present a case? And our object as students of history is simply and dispassionately to set out facts; we will leave it to others to argue from them. But for myself I prefer to rest our case on even stronger ground. I prefer to say that at a moment when so much false sentimentalism, uninformed flabbiness and gush are the fashion and we hear so little about those ancient virtues of which military courage is the strong and secure rock, little enough harm will be done if a few of us at least cultivate a subject which is largely concerned with them.

The subject of military history presented few difficulties in the days, not so long passed, when history itself was considered merely a branch of polite literature, not to say rhetoric. The historian's solicitude was concentrated on the flags and the drums, on the roar of the guns, and the awful carnage; and he made extremely vivid and completely false pictures out of it all. Within a very few years past we have changed all that, just as in pure literature Captain Bluntschli and his invaluable chocolate have rapidly superseded Captain d'Artagnan and his overworked rapier.

In ordinary political history we have prosaically got down to the documents and to a close and unrhetorical examination of facts as facts. So in military history we have abandoned the drum and trumpet and begun to analyze the psychology of generals, on the documents critically examined, and their tactical and strategical methods as seen from a technical point of view. And it may be said, not unfairly, that to judge from the innumerable bad books and few really first rate ones produced the subject is one of extreme difficulty.

Of late years military history has received growing attention in Europe, and in a large sense the lead in this movement may be ascribed to Germany. It was largely by a technical study of her campaign against Austria in 1866 that she succeeded in improving her army in such a way as to make secure the result she obtained in the war against France in 1870. She continued on the same path after that war, and other countries followed, making the historical study of war the basis for the efficient organization of their national armies. In other words a present necessity, an actual military problem, has inspired much of the best work that has been done.

It would exceed the limits of the time at my disposal to review the condition of military historical studies in Europe; I will confine myself to pointing out a few of the facts, and to contrasting them with those in this country. Most of the great European nations have, as one of the essential parts of their general staff, an historical section. In France and Germany these bodies stimulate much valuable work and make possible the publication of much documentary matter. They are stronger, however, on their technical than

on their scholarly side, and their work often suffers from being written too near the event. In those same two countries are published several first rate journals and magazines devoting themselves wholly or in part to military matters and history. In a recent quarterly number of the *Historisches Jahrbuch of the Görres Geselschaft,* which pays little attention to military history, I counted in the current bibliography over twenty titles for the Franco-Prussian war alone. With us, while we have several excellent service journals, the editor of one of which we are fortunate enough to have with us to-day, it is hardly an exaggeration to say that military history plays no part in them.

Then there is the academic side. In England, where military history is not nearly as much developed as in France and England, Oxford has a chair of military history filled by Professor Wilkinson. In addition the university has in Professor Oman one of the foremost military historians of the day, while Professor Firth has produced at least one quite remarkable book in the same field. In Germany there is a famous seminar in military history, that of Professor Delbrück at Berlin. In this country a half-course which I give intermittently at Harvard is, so far as I know, the only thing of the sort to be found in our universities, though our military institutions pay, as is natural, some attention to the matter, as the welcome presence at this meeting of Major McAndrew and Captain Conger demonstrates.

And yet we have all the necessary elements for this study ready to our hands. In the Civil War and the mass of printed documentary material which the government has published we have the most admirable field imaginable for seminar work, for the production of a whole library of first rate military histories. The society of which we are the appreciative guests to-day has shown the way in publishing excellent material for military history, and occasionally strategical and tactical studies of real value. We have produced much military history of a minor character, especially memoirs. A past member of this society established a notable reputation as a military historian, and we have among us to-day those who are following in the footsteps of the late John Codman Ropes. Among young men at college are many, I believe, who would gladly take up this work if only a lead were given them.

What, then, are we to do to further our purpose? That is precisely what we are here to discuss, and I do not wish to anticipate what others may have to suggest. But this much it is at all events safe to say. If we can get experts in scholarly methods and experts in military science to extend the friendly hand of cooperation; if we can obtain more recognition for historical work at army headquarters; if we can establish seminar work in our universities; if we can find or found a journal in which military history would obtain recognition; if we could found a national society for military history—by all or by any such steps we should certainly further the cause of this deserving study.

The Chairman: Military history includes two terms, the subject and method, and military science and discussion of military events and principles, and nothing could be more fitting than that this conference should participate of both elements. We are very fortunate indeed in the presence and the interest here of several members of the United States Army, of whom I shall call as the first Captain Arthur L. Conger, of the Army Service Schools at Fort Leavenworth.

CAPTAIN CONGER said:

No one appreciates better than the military man the fact that military history to-day plays the rôle of Cinderella. Occasionally at these meetings she may be dressed magically by some fairy godmother, such as our friend Professor Johnston on this occasion, and taken to the ball for a few brief dances with the prince, but this does not prevent her having to return to her place in the ashes on the kitchen hearth as soon as the ball is over. While her sisters occupy a place of honor in the world, no one has either a kind word or any attention to give her. Yet we who know our Cinderella know that she is really more beautiful than all her sisters and look forward with hope to the time when the prince shall seize, as she departs, the golden slipper, in the form of a conception of what military history really is, whereby he may seek her out, identify her, and give her her rightful place in the palace.

Why is it that military history is to-day a discredited subject among scholars, and why are such military histories as we have so unsatisfactory and misleading?

It is a remarkable fact that Germany, which has given us our historical method and our modern conception of war, should have failed to combine the two and set a standard for the writing of military history. Yet, though the historical section of the German general staff publishes an increasing number of volumes yearly, the contents of these volumes shows not only that the writers are not acquainted with the principles of historical method, but that the direction is imbued with Napoleon's conception of official history—a point of view promulgated by the government for its own purposes. Thus we may see how wide a gap in the matter of history exists between the official military world and the world of scholarship as represented by the German universities. Nor are the universities given access to the war archives, as that could only result in overthrowing the official view.

The historical section of the German general staff is indissolubly connected with the name of von Moltke, who as chief of staff organized it and gave close supervision to its work. While von Moltke had no training in historical method, in the modern sense, yet his large experience enabled him to appreciate the value of first-hand evidence and he brought to the investigation of the wars, the historic materials for the study of which were under his control, a certain ripeness of judgment and practical knowledge which saved him many errors.

The war of 1866 with Austria was the first important war in which Prussia had been engaged for more than a half-century. It was thus manifestly of prime importance for von Moltke, and indeed the whole army, to study the history of that war in detail in order to ascertain the good as well as the bad features of Prussian training and tactics, to clear up beyond question those points which needed improvement to insure success gainst a more formidable foe than Austria.

The facilities for a review of events in campaign in the German army may be appreciated when it is known that every evening each battalion and higher commander makes a report of the day's events. Should he desire to change his report subsequently he cannot have the original report back, but may forward as many supplementary reports as he pleases, to be filed with the original. Anyone who has worked with our own Civil War reports, many of them written months after the events described, cannot fail to appreciate

the relatively easy task history writing would be were this wealth of data available, by subordinates as well as principals and all written the same day.

Take in connection with the above the methodical trained habits of the German staff officer: he sets his watch each morning with the official timepiece at headquarters; at each important occurrence during the day, be it the time of opening artillery fire or the time the column reaches a certain crossroad, he consults his watch and, not trusting memory, jots down the event with the precise time in his note-book. Some note-books of this character have been published in facsimile,* and one can readily see that with records of this sort kept and turned in to the historical bureau, historical writing may become a matter of far greater precision than has hitherto been possible.

The manner in which von Moltke dealt with the materials of the war of 1866 may best be appreciated by a study of the Memorial of July 25, 1868,† presented to the king proposing certain changes in and additions to the regulations. From this we may see that almost no detail of tactics was too small to escape his notice. The causes of success as well as of failure were examined and the proposed changes in the regulations were all based on a careful study of actual occurrences.

Thus the spirit of the study of the war of '66 was one of investigation in which von Moltke and the general staff are seeking to know, and so far as practicable to promulgate the truth about the war. After 1870 various causes combined to produce a change of attitude. The quarrel between Bismarck and von Moltke in front of Paris, the undesirability of allowing the French or even the Germans to realize by how narrow a thread success had often hung in the balance during the war, and the growing friction between the states of the newly formed German Empire pointed to a policy not only of suppression but, where desirable, of conversion of facts, and the employment of the official historical bureau to promote certain political aims soon became adopted as a fixed policy.

The work of preparing the official account of the war of 1870–71 was completed in 1873 and bears the imprint of the master-mind of von Moltke, whose cunning hand is visible again and again in artfully concealing the truth without becoming too deeply involved. It was soon recognized, however, that certain statements in the official history explaining the reasons for the concentration on the Rhine,‡ implying that the movement of troops to the frontier was only begun after the completion of the mobilization and asserting that the concentration was carried out to the last detail on a prearranged plan without friction§ were likely to prove misleading to German officers themselves and thereby injure the efficiency of the army in future campaigns. To correct these wrong impressions means were taken to give the army the real facts without, however, disclosing them publicly.

When it came to dealing with the causes of failure of the French army in 1870 we find the official history stating:¶

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*See, for example, "Lebenserinnerungen von Gustav von Schubert," Leipzig, 1909, p. 320.

†"Moltke's Taktisch-strategische Aufsätze," published by the Great General Staff on the centenary of von Moltke's birth, Berlin, 1900, p. 73.

‡1870–71, vol. I, pp. 84–88.

§1870–71, vol. I, p. 86.

¶Vol. I, p. 22.

The internal state of the army labored under serious disadvantages. . . . The non-commissioned officers had lost their former high position. . . . The junior officers of the army did not devote their entire abilities to the service. . . . The prevailing favoritism extended even to persons of tarnished reputation very naturally disgusted them and opened out very little prospect for the future. . . . The same element of favoritism had also raised into high positions many men who were unequal to their duties, exercising its disastrous influence here as it ever will. Owing to the constant change in the form of government, that loyalty and attachment to a lineal dynasty which in other countries avert dangers to the public well being, had ceased to exist both in the army and in the nation.

The last sentence betrays the purpose of the whole, to build an argument in favor of a lineal dynasty by ascribing the failure of the French army in a large measure to the fact that Napoleon III had not been born to the purple. The facts that conditions were reversed in 1806, and that probably no armies were ever more devoted to their leaders than were his later ones to Napoleon I, are overlooked.

One section of the German general staff concerns itself with writing monographs on wars in which Germany has not herself taken part. In these we find displayed the strongest partisanship, as well as every pretext made use of for justifying the German military system.

Thus we read in the monograph on the Boer war:

The British military administration cannot be absolved from the severe reproach that it had not properly appreciated the tactical experiences of former struggles in South Africa.*

The regulations under which the army took the field in 1899 followed comparatively closely the lines of the German regulations. The unfavorable conditions of training, however, under which especially the infantry and cavalry suffered in the mother-country, where exercises in varied terrain are almost an impossibility, prevented the materialization of the principles of training approved in Germany.†

A footnote quotes Lord Wolseley as saying that "Maneuvers on the continental system were impracticable in England since they would unfavorably affect recruiting."‡

When we stop to consider what are the former struggles, lack of consideration of which is so severe a reproach, we find the episodes of Majuba Hill and the Jameson Raid hardly enough, it seems, to build a new system of tactics upon.

In view of the similarity between the German and English tactics, the general staff finds it necessary to explain why these tactics proved wanting in South Africa, and ascribes it to faulty training. No mention is made of the fact that the German tactics were found equally inapplicable to the conditions of warfare in Germany's own African colonies.

In the footnote we find the opportunity of justifying the German maneuver system and conscription law eagerly taken advantage of; also the real objection to the maneuvers as conducted in Germany, namely, the hardship caused by quartering troops on the inhabitants, is skilfully lost to view.

But not content with casting slurs on the British War Office and system

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*Kriegsgeschichtliche Einzelschriften, Heft 32, p. 16.
†*Ibid.*, p. 17.
‡*Ibid.*, p. 18.

of training, the general staff history strikes further directly at the morale of the troops:

With the fruitless yet by no means especially costly attacks at Paardeburg there began to spread a nervousness of suffering loss, and of making an attack which bore bad fruit far beyond the limits of South Africa, while one substantial reason for the long continuance of the war was, undoubtedly, the avoidance of striking any crushing blow at the Boers.

The account goes on to relate that it would have been easy (for the Boers) to penetrate through their (the English) thin firing line and for Cronje to escape but for the errors of deWet and other leaders.*

The injustice of this becomes apparent when we consider the heroic losses sustained by certain British organizations at Paardeburg without flinching, and that the failure of the attack must be ascribed to faulty orders of the high command resulting in undue dispersion and lack of coordination of the attacking troops rather than to losses or nervousness resulting from losses. From this time on we find further that the Boers were unable to make any effective resistance to the main British advance, which was everywhere successful. In the guerilla warfare which followed we find the Boers skilfully avoiding contact with main columns but descending in relatively overwhelming forces on lightly guarded convoys and small bodies of troops which often offered heroic resistance against overwhelming odds. In strong contrast with its arraignment of the British morale at Paardeburg the German official account credits the failure of the Boers—who throughout the war proved unable to take up and sustain a vigorous offensive—to an "error of judgment" on the part of the Boer leaders, thus seeking to deprive the English of the credit of deserving even the successes which they actually reaped.

The British artillery also comes in for its quota of disparagement. The account says, referring to the lyddite shells:

In spite of the overwhelming fire . . . their effect on the well intrenched Boers was small. When they burst they usually made a most diabolical noise, but the fragments were very few in number, and the shells made holes in the sandy soil about 60 cm. (two feet) wide and 30 cm. (one-foot) deep.†

The account goes on to quote from a participant:

The lyddite shells had, as a rule, no effect whatever on men lying down. I have been present myself when Boers had their clothes scorched by bursting lyddite projectiles but only had their skins scratched. The Boers had little respect for the British artillery, especially for its lyddite fire. . . . We were frequently not deterred thereby from getting out from under cover to make coffee under lyddite fire.

As a matter of fact a shell making a hole in sandy soil two feet wide and a foot deep is a shell of unusual power for a field gun. A high-powered shell is, however, not usually employed against troops, but to demolish particular objects, since their effect is highly localized. Here, as elsewhere, a quotation is introduced without reference to person, time, or place, for the very transparent purpose of instilling into the minds of German officers the belief that the British artillery is not to be dreaded, and also into the minds of the British

*Kriegsgeshichtliche Einzelschriften, Heft 33, p. 71.
†*Ibid.*, p. 73.

that their artillery is not to be relied on for effectiveness, for it is well known that these monographs are promptly translated into English and perhaps more widely read and credited in England than in Germany.

Thus it will be seen how far from being calm, judicial, and critical investigations into the truth of history are the German official accounts. Nor is this onesidedness confined to their dealings with foreign nations such as France and England; it becomes apparent in their treatment of the troops of the minor German states.

It is well known that the crossing of the lines of march of the Prussian Guard Corps and the XII (Saxon) Corps, on the 18th of August, 1870, was not accidental, but was designed in order to bring the Guard Corps into what was believed to be the place of honor for making the decisive attack. It had, however, the opposite result. The Guard Corps had, it is true, full opportunity for the display of its fighting prowess, but the Saxon corps eventually was found to be in the place for bringing about the final decision at Saint Privat.

The official account published by the German general staff in 1873 glossed over to some extent the desperate situation of the Guard Corps before the arrival of the Saxons, but rendered substantial justice to the Saxons:

> Both (Prince George of Saxony and Crown Prince Albert) had the intention of first securing the occupation of Roncourt and then advancing to the attack of Saint Privat. However some of the Saxon leaders received direct information of the state of the battle at Saint Privat and, urged to participate in the furious struggle of the Guard at that place as soon as possible, turned in that direction.*

Compare the above with the following taken from the study of the battle published by the general staff in 1905:

> Lieut. v. Esbeck, sent to find out where the XII Corps was, met the Saxon infantry advancing west of the small wood between Roncourt and Montois la Montagne. . . . He reported to the regimental commander that the Guard urgently needed support in flank. . . . Through the efforts of Lieut. v. Esbeck a total of five and a half battalions turned out of the Saxon attacking line towards Saint Privat, while the remaining troops continued in the direction of Roncourt. . . . Lieut. v. Esbeck had no orders to divert the march of the Saxons towards Saint Privat. He acted independently under the impression that the left wing of the 1st Guard Infantry Brigade was not making headway north of the large basin towards Roncourt; it was anyway not his intention to draw the Saxons away towards Saint Privat but merely to hasten their advance on Roncourt which he believed to be still occupied.†

The contrast between these two views needs no comment. As an excuse for the divergence of the "study" published in 1905 from the history published in 1873 it has been alleged that much new material had been brought to light in the meantime, and especially that much of value had been gleaned from replies to question sheets sent out to participants. Anyone who has had any practise in historical criticism will readily appreciate the futility of the attempt to reconstruct a history, based on such reliable sources as was the official account of 1873, on the strength of recollections written thirty years after the event.

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*Der Krieg, 1870–71, vol. II, p. 881.

†"Der 18 August, 1870," pp. 508–9.

In speaking of the artillery preparation for the final assault on Saint Privat the 1873 history says:

The combined fire of the Saxon artillery and the ten Prussian batteries, south of the Chaussee, was not long in showing its effect on the village (of Saint Privat) encumbered with French troops. . . . Practically at the same time the Saxons reached the north and northwest and the Guard the west and south of the burning village.*

Compare with the above the laborious effort of the 1905 study to show that the Saxon artillery did not assist in the fire preparation for the assault on Saint Privat:

When Crown Prince Albert . . . observed that his infantry in part proceeded towards Saint Privat, after Roncourt was in the hands of the Germans, he directed his artillery to turn against Saint Privat. This renewed change of position was made with great difficulty. The batteries south of the woods of Aboué had not yet fully deployed in their position there when it became necessary to limber up again. The movement came to a standstill, hampered by the infantry; from the north some few batteries hastened up and crowded into the newly gained firing position. By the time order had been fully restored and the batteries were all in position Saint Privat was already in the hands of the Germans.†

The "study" goes on to relate that it was the Guard who made the charge on Saint Privat from the north as well as from the west and south, admitting that a few Saxon companies became mixed in the charge from the north with a Guard regiment, but offsetting this with the statement that as a matter of fact the troops charging from the south were the first to reach the village.

After thus robbing the Saxon corps of all credit of participating in the attack on Saint Privat, in a manner scarcely creditable to a press agent, the "study" awards the Saxons these few damning words of faint praise:

But from all this the conclusion should not be drawn that the envelopment by the XII Corps was entirely barren of results. A movement against a flank always has a certain moral effect on the defender even if he has employed sufficient means to meet it; he still feels the threatening of his line of retreat.‡

One unacquainted with German conditions will at once ask: Would the Saxon officers still living who participated in this battle remain silent in the face of these statements, even when made from an official source, were they not true? Reference to the Saxon newspapers of the years 1906–7 will show that they were not allowed to pass unchallenged. The fact that the denials were mainly anonymous points to the fact that a German army officer is not allowed to contradict the "official view."

This domination of the official view is further indicated by the storm of official protest and anger over the publication of the "War Letters" of General Kretschman, edited by his daughter, Lily Braun. These letters mention certain plundering and excesses committed by German troops on the field of battle, but worst of all, from the official viewpoint, the fact that the now famous cavalry charges made on the 16th of August, 1870, were not undertaken willingly by the cavalry leaders, but only after stormy protests and every

*Der Krieg, 1870–71, vol. 2, p. 890.
†Der 18 August, 1870, p. 524.
‡*Ibid.*, p. 565.

possible attempt to evade the order to charge. The editor tells us in the preface to the second edition, published in 1904 a few months after the first, that she had been publicly but falsely accused by her cousin, a lieutenant in the army, of having insulted her father in his grave by violating his written instructions to have his personal correspondence burned upon his death, while so eminent an authority as General Boguslawski, in reviewing the work, said that twenty-five or thirty letters should have been omitted for decency's sake and quoted as applicable to the editor the saying of the Duke of Biron, as he stepped up to the guillotine: "I have been unfaithful to my God, to my king, and to my people."

Thus may be realized how serious in Germany is the offense of contradicting the official history. But, as a matter of fact, the higher officers understand quite well the lack of value of the official history as history and look elsewhere when they wish to study their own wars.

Time will not permit an examination of the work of the French general staff historical section. In some ways it is superior to the work of the German general staff, but it is still far from being satisfactory, as historical work.

We have enough, however, to give an answer to the question why military history is in disrepute: it is because those in exclusive control of the main sources either do not know how to use, or for some reason will not use them intelligently to write military history.

When we come to the field of our own military history we find a numerous bibliography rich in pretentious and controversial work but singularly lacking in works of merit, because no one equipped with a working knowledge of historical method and the necessary technical knowledge of war has yet presented us with any considerable work on our own campaigns.

Much can be done by the American Historical Association, by our universities, and by the establishment of a magazine devoted to military history to remedy this situation, but I do not believe a real solution of the problem can be found which leaves out of consideration the establishment of an historical section of our general staff. Certain fundamental work, such as the establishment of the basic data relative to the strength, organization and armament of armies as well as the preparation of reliable maps, can only be accomplished in this way.

To argue that the establishment of such a section would give rise to additional works of partisanship is inadmissible because the section could have no possible reason for such partisanship. Nor could our government have any possible objection to a clear statement of the whole truth of every period of our own military history as well as that of other nations.

It is, of course, possible that incompetent officers might be assigned to this work, but against that the best safeguard would be the close cooperation and interest of the American Historical Association in the work, which would make the assignment of such an officer "for political reasons" an impossibility.

THE CHAIRMAN: I suppose we all realize that everyone of us here present is a potential soldier, that we are all liable in the last resort to be called into the service of our country, and under the new conditions which are coming over the country those who cannot shoulder the musket must at least have the red cross bound upon their arms, and the time is possibly coming when every young man, as he approaches age, will have the opportunity of proving that he can be a soldier by a brief military service under the flag of his country.

A representative of the militia, who has had considerable service and experience in the state militia of New York, is present, and I am going to call next upon Mr. Oswald Villard, editor of the New York *Evening Post.*

MR. VILLARD said:

Ladies and gentlemen, I was not aware that any such position was assigned to me in this discussion or that it would partake of so formal a nature, and so I must say that I have not prepared any formal paper, as the gentlemen have done who have preceded me. My interest in the matter is not as a former militiaman, nor altogether as a student of current military affairs, but as one who has tried somewhat to write history and hopes to do something more along the line of military history in the years to come.

As I have listened to the discussion here the question has come to me as to whether we were not discussing two separate things, whether the ideals that some of us have in view are not so different from those of the military gentlemen who are present as to make it impossible for us to unite. Is there not a different conception of ideas on the part of gentlemen like Captain Conger? Do they not confine in their minds the study of military history to the technical purpose of preparing military men to take command in the field? Is their desire not to write history from the point of view of instruction in tactics and strategy and eulogy, whereas those of us who are interested in the study of history as a purely historical study are interested from the broader point of view of the national life, of the setting forth of the actual occurrences of the past, with less attention to detail? In Mr. Roosevelt's remarkable address* last night he appealed for a broader view, a more interesting treatment and more vital treatment of history. Can we expect from official sources, at least that treatment of the general subject of history which I think most of us will agree Mr. Roosevelt is the leader of among our historians? Take the question of the preparation of American history by the American general staff. That, it seems to me, would invariably lead to the writing of history from one particular point of view, perhaps from a predetermined point of view. I am probably at the other extreme from Captain Conger; I am a peace man and almost a peace-at-any-price man; I am not one who can subscribe to the doctrine that war is necessary in the future or that we must produce soldiers in order to prevent it. Heaven forbid! Is it not a fact that gentlemen who are engaged in the military profession and who are most honorably inspired with eal to improve that profession, to elevate it in this country, to dignify it, would necessarily, from their very position in the military profession, have a bias? Will they not necessarily develop their history from the point of view of proving that the country needs to do this or that in order to defend itself, in order to avert this threatening degradation that may come to us if some other nation should impose its will upon our will? These are matters that I would like to have submitted to you for your considereation.

The general staff is a comparatively new institution. Lest you think that I am unfriendly to it I would like to make the personal statement that I believe I was the first editor in this country to advocate the establishment of a general staff, more than twenty years ago, and I have always been friendly to the idea. The fact is, however, that the development of the general staff

*History as Literature; an address by Theodore Roosevelt, President of the American Historical Association, Symphony Hall, Boston, December 27, 1912.

has disappointed many of its friends, and that is not so much due, it seems to us, to the men who have composed it, who have been the flower of the service, as to certain conditions under which they operate. Congress has felt somewhat dissatisfied with the way it has been conducted; at least, one may deduce that from the fact that in the last session of Congress the general staff was decreased and may be still further decreased. It has shown a certain tendency to mix in with political affairs, to lay down the law to Congress, whether rightly or wrongly, it has seemed to do so, and Congress has resented it. The future of that institution therefore is obviously open to question. It is a fact in military history that General Sherman found it necessary, because of his relations with the politicians and Congress, to transfer the army headquarters from Washington to St. Louis. Conditions in the War Department had become so intolerable as to make that necessary. It is not an impossible thought that at some future time it may be advisable, both from the point of view of the politicians and of the general staff, to transfer the activities of that body away from Washington, perhaps to Fort Leavenworth or some other army school, like West Point.

The detail to the general staff is, as you are aware, for a period of four years. Under the recent law passed by Congress at the past session that law is being rigidly enforced and no man can serve again with the general staff unless he has spent a certain amount of time with his regiment or corps, as the case may be. That in itself would, it seems to me, make against the writing of scientific history in the War Department.

A section of the general staff, it has always seemed to me, interested in the preparation of history, the writing of history, can perform a very great service by developing the instruction at the service schools, as it is already doing at West Point particularly, in the teaching of the men in the service how to write. That, after all, is the fundamental thing. Professor Johnston has pointed out in his paper that certain qualifications are necessary to the military student as to the historian, and one of those is that he shall learn how to write. Now the service has produced certain great writers, even in recent years, without referring again to Sherman or Sheridan or Grant. I might point more particularly to Herbert Sargent and others and John Bigelow, Jr., who have shown that they can treat this subject; but the mass of the men who come out of West Point are not as well equipped even to record their observations as they ought to be.

Finally, I sincerely hope that out of this conference there will grow a civilian national society for the study of military history, free from any violence, from any prejudgment. I think that if I should attempt to write history from my peace-loving point of view I should reflect discredit upon Professor Hart, from whom I have learned what little I know about historical writing. That, it seems to me, is not the right way to go at it, any more than it would be to start off with the theory that we have got always to carry on war or that we must demonstrate that present conditions are not what they ought to be, from our individual point of view. History is history and the recording of facts precisely as we see them, and the culling of truths is, after all, what historians are after. I hope we can form a society which will raise a structure, which will reach those of us who are moving in that direction how we may proceed, which will lead to an interchange of ideas, and which will have as its members the distinguished military gentlemen who are here to-day; and they can help us, I am sure, as I think we can help them.

THE CHAIRMAN: The biographer of John Brown, a rigorous biographer, an impartial biographer, yet a sympathetic biographer, may simply be considered to represent both peace and war at such a conference. We have every shade of opinion and point of view in a conference of this kind, and nothing can be more enlightening in the way of a searchlight than a talk like that which Mr. Villard throws upon the subject from his point of view.

I am going next to call upon the man among us who I suppose has had most actual experience in the military art, namely, Col. T. L. Livermore, retired, U. S. Army.

COLONEL LIVERMORE said:

Mr. Chairman, ladies, and gentlemen, it is a great surprise and a great pleasure to me to be here, to be called upon to take part in a conference upon military history, a branch in which I have always been interested and which I believe to be one of the most important branches of history. I was absent from town at the time this was started and I know nothing of the purpose of this meeting except what I have gathered from Professor Johnston since I arrived, through the papers which he handed me, which were published in the INFANTRY JOURNAL, one by himself and one by the editor.

It was a great pleasure to me to know that the meeting was to be called here in this hall, this hall which Mr. Ropes established for the purposes of military history. Most of us know that twenty or thirty years ago the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts was established and for a long time met at his house, where he was in the habit of inviting once a month some distinguished Confederate or Federal commander, and, after a jovial dinner, they would read papers and we would all discuss them there at his house. Afterwards this hall was built, mainly at Mr. Ropes' expense, and dedicated to this purpose. . . . In these meetings, although we didn't always arrive at the exact truth, we learned more than we probably could have learned otherwise from the way in which the subjects were viewed by many of the principal actors and of what they thought of the motives that prompted the movements and the results of those movements. In the memoirs of the society many of these were published and furnished valuable contributions as material for military history. . . . It is therefore peculiarly appropriate that a conference which has for its object cooperation in writing military history should have its meeting here. I am also very glad indeed to see officers from the War College and from the service schools present here and taking an interest in the subject.

For more than thirty years I have urged strongly upon the War Department and upon the generals commanding the Army the establishment of a general staff, and especially of a military historical section of such general staff. Afterwards, when the general staff was about to be organized, I recommended informally a military historical section to that body. What we have heard from these papers today tends to confirm what I thought then of the importance of the subject. Military history is not only one of the most important branches of military science, but it may be regarded as the basis of military science. The rules of strategy and grand tactics are either based upon or checked up by military history in its broadest sense. To know what we can do under certain circumstances we must know what other men did under similar circumstances before. Considering what has been said in the papers that I have heard and from what I have learned of the purposes of this meeting,

with which I am in general agreement, I think I can express my views better by reading a few extracts from the introduction to a volume which I am now publishing in continuation of Mr. Ropes' "Story of the Civil War."

A large part of all the history that has been written relates in some way to military operations. In the opinion of many historians to-day, the condition of the people, their physical, intellectual, moral and industrial development, especially in time of peace, are the only subjects worthy of their consideration. Under the present conditions, however, peace, compatible with the demands of prosperity, honor and morality, can be maintained only by due preparation for war. The one great object of war is peace. If the history of three thousand years does not show that no lasting peace is worth having that is not based upon the ability to fight, at least half of such history has been written in vain. Warfare is barbarous. It may be inhuman. All nations should disarm, but in proper sequence. When all are armed and prepared in the proportion in which we would wish them to prosper, let all be disarmed in the same proportion and as promptly as possible.

The present period is one of rapid development. In the struggle for existence, great nations are crowding upon each other. Universal peace will not be possible until conflicting interests shall have been adjusted. All nations but our own are preparing for defense. By neglecting to bear our share of the burden, we are insulting the rest of the civilized world upon whom we now rely for our safety in the hope that each nation will hold the other in check, and save us from all trouble and expense. . . . If we take the proper measures for self-defense, weaker nations will gather around us and add to our strength.

The history of the Civil War is useful in keeping alive the military interest of the present generation so that the next may have some civil history to record. It shows that our armies, on both sides, endured as much and fought as bravely as any in the world. The troops showed, perhaps, more self-reliance and more capacity for the individual action demanded by the warfare of to-day than those of any great army of ancient or modern times. The federal armies were finally victorious; but hundreds of thousands of lives and incalculable privations and sufferings would have been spared if the nation had been prepared for war, if the federal armies had been better trained and their operations more skilfully conducted. The lack of training and discipline was not so apparent, because both armies suffered from it, though perhaps not always to the same degree. With regard to the conduct of grand operations, it must be remembered that the military training of the generals had mainly been confined to the life in a small post with one or two companies; perhaps they had never expected to take part in a greater war than that just concluded with Mexico. In almost any war whose operations can be thoroughly analyzed it will be found that much is lost from bad troop-leading which could have been saved if the same attention had been given heretofore as now to practise in time of peace, on the map and in the field, of the application of military principles to the varied exigencies of a campaign and a battle.

From the history of the campaigns and battles of our Civil War, one can learn much, not because those campaigns and battles were always well conducted, but because they gave rise to so many military situations, each one of which offers a useful field for the study of military problems. We are more concerned now in learning what should have been done in each case than in deciding who was most to blame for not doing it.

. . . . . .

Nearly half a century has passed since the battle of Gettysburg; twenty-four centuries since the battle of Marathon. In many respects the art of war has changed more from Gettysburg to the present time, than from Marathon to Gettysburg. To study the dispositions and movements of the battle of Gettysburg with a view to copying them now might prove to be a fatal error. To draw up an army of 85,000 men on open ground on a line of three or four miles in length with an average depth of nine or ten solid ranks, and in the presence of a hostile army of nearly equal strength, would be to deliver it over to captivity or slaughter. The human factors, however, have not changed; and even the forms are not so different as the dimensions.

The narrative of this volume has been based as far as possible upon the official record. It is a common impression that the reports in themselves convey intelligible and detailed accounts of the operations, and that the historian has only to select from these such material as he may need for his narrative. Most of them, however, convey no definite idea of the position of the troops to any one but the officers to whom they were addressed; and many have by themselves no value whatever to the historian. Yet, by repeatedly comparing each with other reports and with other evidence, by the aid of the detailed maps of the battle-fields, a military expert can learn where almost every regiment was from the beginning to the end of a campaign or a battle. This is almost the only great war for which this would be possible. The official record of the War of the Rebellion is extensively consulted at home and abroad, and of late years especially in England, where its value is now fairly understood.

It is hoped that the references and maps in this volume will serve as a key to make the reports more intelligible. Besides the official reports, many accounts have been written by the commanders on each side and by others who took part in the war. Some of these are very valuable; but if not based upon memoranda made at the time, such accounts are not to be taken without caution as reliable original evidence. The most conscientious narrator finds after a short lapse of time that his recollections have been colored by the conceptions based, more or less unconsciously, upon the accounts and the discussion of others. . . .

An estimate of the strength and losses of each army in each campaign and battle has been tabulated. The positions of the opposing troops from month to month in campaign, and from hour to hour in battle, have been so expressed by a series of maps as to show at a glance the general course of the operations; and what each prominent commander said and thought about the situation from time to time, and his plans for meeting it, are told in the text, so that the reader may have before him the data on which to base his own judgment without reference to the comments which follow.

Only a professional soldier would care, perhaps, to make an exhaustive analysis of a battle; but the results are valuable to the general historian, and full of interest to the untechnical reader.

In Professor Johnston's paper he comments upon the fragmentary nature of the knowledge in regard to the Civil War and says, for example, "Who knows what was done? Who knows what was done when Grant made his campaign around Vicksburg?" and he speaks of several other instances. I have had in mind to point out that error, in this volume which is just appearing, and in describing the campaign at Vicksburg I have given a map for the movements of the armies for each and every day when there was any considerable movement, from Grant's first movement until the battle of Champion Hills. In the battle of Champion Hills I have shown the position of every regiment every hour and sometimes every half-hour until the engagement was finished. The same thing is true of the battle of Big Black Ridge. In the assault on Vicksburg I have shown on the plan where each regiment was at each stage of the assault. This I have tried to do for all the operations, and it is in this way especially, t seems to me, that the general staff could be of material advantage, material help, to historians of the country at large. There are, as we have learned from the other papers, many civilian historians all through the country, who would be glad to write of the Civil War if they only knew what they were writing about, if they only knew where the troops were.

I don't at all agree with the last speaker if he meant to imply that military officers couldn't write history without taking one side. I think I may have misunderstood the purport of his speech, but in any event I am sure that they could, and it is quite possible for them to furnish not only that information

which is so valuable, and to which Captain Conger referred, but also all these data as to the position of troops from time to time, the strength of regiments, and so forth, which would serve as a foundation for historical writing by civilians.

Now, as regards the general purpose of this meeting, I am decidedly in favor of the formation of a military historical society, a national military historical society. I think the interest is great enough in it and I think our people are waking up to the necessity that they will have to take a livelier interest than they have been taking in military matters, and I am very glad to see that it has taken its start here.

THE CHAIRMAN: We are all indebted to Colonel Livermore, who both in actual service and as a retired officer has so singularly devoted himself to this question of military history. There are two representatives of the Army to whom we shall shortly listen. Before we listen to them I want to call for the views of Professor F. M. Fling of the University of Nebraska.

PROFESSOR FLING said:

Mr. Chairman, ladies, and gentlemen, I came in here simply as a listener and did not know until Professor Hart spoke to me that I would be called upon to talk at all. What I shall say has been suggested to me by the discussion. It seems to me that we are confounding some things here that should be kept apart. I can't see that this question as to whether we are peace men or war men—I am a peace man myself and might disagree with my good friend Captain Conger, because I think peace is within practical reach—I can't see that that has anything to do with military history. History has to be of the past and not of the future. And whatever we may think of the future there is no question that there has been a great deal of fighting done in the past. The business of the historian deals with the entire past. The idea of the older generation was that it was to deal with political history, but that has been pretty well exploded since Freeman's day. Fighting has been a large part of the history of the past and we are obliged to deal with it.

Now the question is, it seems to me, if we are going to deal with it: Who is to deal with it? And you will note that Captain Conger gave a great deal of time and attention in his paper to the official histories. I think that was misunderstood by some of you here. His purpose was to show how it was done by the official bureau, and to show that it may be an unwise thing at the present time—perhaps at any time—to put the writing of history into an official bureau; and his illustrations, it seemed to me, taken from the work of the German staff or its historical section, were rather convincing. On the other hand, I don't think he intended to convey the idea that history should not be written by military men. I believe it should; I believe that it should be written by a man who is a military man, who knows what war means technically, who has been through enough experience to know what it is like, and at the same time has had a training technically and historically. That, I think, is the weak side of a good deal of military history. It is not sufficient for a man to know his subject-matter. I think, again, that on the other hand civilians make a mistake when they think that history cannot be written by the army man, because the army man has in mind the application of things. You can't apply a thing effectively until you know it. Now, the man who is properly trained as a military man and as a historian knows that if his

military history is to be of any use to him whatever he must approach it from an independent point of view with the effort to discover exactly what took place. When he knows that he can consider what use he can make of it. If he approaches it simply from the point of view of utilizing certain things he never really gets at the truth. First let us know what the truth is and then the military man can understand what he can do.

This idea of pragmatic effort—and I think there has been a good deal of that suggested this morning—is really an outgrown stage. The teaching of history is a thing which we may concern ourselves with if we know what history is. Teaching is not good for much unless we approach the subject from a scientific, unbiased point of view, determined to know the truth, whatever it may be. It may be useful or it may not, but that is not the question.

Now there is no doubt that we have got a large chance to write military history in this country. I am not a specialist in United States history or the history of the Civil War, but I know enough about the situation from my own reading and conversation with military men who have been doing some work upon it to know that we are hardly at the beginning of the work, and the real trouble has been that for the most part, no matter how good our men have been as military men, they didn't know how to write history, they didn't know how to review it, didn't know what the historical process was. That is the first point.

Now men have attempted to write a history of the Civil War; even one man has attempted it, and about all one man could do in his lifetime would be to write in a successful way the history of one campaign. That is the trouble with our historical writing; it isn't peculiar with military historical writing, but it is the trouble with history from beginning to end. Men have been writing the history of the French Revolution, and we haven't a decent history of the French Revolution to-day, though it was more than one hundred years ago, because men were not satisfied to do what they could do and lay a foundation for a synthesis, or to undertake exhaustive work upon the topic that might lay a foundation for a synthesis.

The attitude of the public is a discouraging one; it is constantly discouraging scientific work, constantly discouraging detail work. We can't have a sound general history until we have established a reliable foundation upon which the details can rest and on which the men who can use the synthesis can build their structure. But until those foundations are laid, those books written, no one can write a large synthesis. I don't believe that good historical work can ever be done in a practical way of the Civil War until a group of well-trained men—first of all, to my mind, military men who know the subject-matter and know what the details must mean—have got together.

In the second place, in order to write history it must be handled independently; the material that we have been working upon must be handled independently upon the details, independently upon the different campaigns, in order to make this larger synthesis possible. The question is, how is that to be done? I don't believe the universities are going to do very much of that. I am interested in this thing and I had hoped that Captain Conger would say something about the work being done at Fort Leavenworth. It has been interesting to me ever since they started in to train army men there in historical research, studying the campaigns, putting the sources right into their hands, and showing them how to work it up. I have been interested ever

since they started and I have been down there and seen the work they are doing, and I think there is a most promising beginning there with that big group of the finest kind of men. I talked to a class one morning upon historical matters, and it was a real inspiration to get before twenty-four or twenty-five men like that who fixed their eyes upon you when you started and kept them there for an hour. Picked men of that kind can do something yet, if we can get those men into Leavenworth under a competent instructor and give them two years of that kind of thing. If the Army is simply a defensive instrument and the men have plenty of idle time on their hands, it is a splendid thing to work at training them up as historians and let them take all the points you are working up, and in a comparatively short time you will have the foundation of a valuable history of the Civil War, and I think you can get those results by the right kind of teaching.

I know the work being done and I know the broad scale of it and I think from the men I have met that I shouldn't ask a finer type of men, men who had approached the question of war from a historical point of view and such a well-balanced way as these men are getting at Leavenworth, and I think if we can push that thing along and give them a free hand, if we give them a chance to do it in that way, historical research will take care of itself.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is a very gratifying thing to have with us here men who are engaged in a scientific career at the Army War College, and it is a great advantage to us to be able to listen to them. I take great pleasure in introducing to you Maj. J. W. McAndrew of the Army War College, who will be the next speaker.

MAJOR MCANDREW said:

Mr. Chairman, ladies, and gentlemen, we thank the gentlemen of the American Historical Association who have made it possible for us to present at this conference the views of the Army on the proper methods of writing military history and of awakening in our people an interest in its study. The Army owes a debt of gratitude particularly to Professor Johnston for his interest in this work. What he has said and written shows such a clear insight into the subject from the Army's point of view that we are willing to trust our case in his hands and to follow the path he has already blazed.

This is an age when science directs its efforts to the prevention rather than to the cure of the ills that mankind formerly accepted as inevitable. The medical profession aims to make disease of the body impossible, and no longer waits for the disease to appear before taking up the fight against it. Our best mechanical skill is directed towards preventing accidents to life and property rather than to quick repair of the damage done. The statesman aims at a stable government founded upon the happiness and prosperity of its people and not at one founded upon force and repression. All this is in line with the progress of the human race.

The greatest aid to science in its efforts wholly to eradicate disease is the study of the history of the disease and of the warfare waged against it in all its progressive stages. By such study previous mistakes are avoided and only the most promising line of action need be followed.

If war be a disease, it would serve the happiness and prosperity of the human race far more to prevent it than to contend with it only after its advent. It can be emphatically stated that, contrary to a widespread belief, neither

the Army nor the Navy desires war, nor looks forward to war as an ideal condition for even the profession of arms. There is no more earnest advocate of universal peace than the soldier who has seen war. His abhorrence of this diseased condition of the political body arises not from mere sentimental theory, but from an adequate conception of the horrors of the battlefield, and of the frightful toll war exacts in property as well as in life. As a practical man, however, the study of his profession teaches him that wars cannot be avoided by doing away with armies and navies any more than that crime can be prevented by abolishing the police forces of our cities. So long as the disease of war is latent among nations, we believe in having at hand, the moment the disease breaks into virulence, the remedies and means to apply at once the treatment that will bring it to a swift and sure conclusion. If we are not prepared to do this the ravages of the disease are multiplied indefinitely.

Were the question of war or peace, then, to rest with the Army and the Navy alone there could be no question that peace would be chosen. But if we read our history aright we must see that with us the Army and the Navy have no voice in the making of war, and that, on the contrary, war has been entered upon by our nation against the counsels of our best soldiers. Even the government that at the time controlled the affairs of the nation cannot be held responsible for the wars that have come upon us. It was the American people as a whole that forced our officials into action. And can we even hope that unbiased historians will find that our cause was always just? We recognize, then, the fact that when the people will it war must come, and that in the excitement of the moment no stop is made to consider whether we are prepared or not or what the appalling cost of unpreparedness is to be. The lessons that might have been learned from previous wars are lost to our people because they have not learned aright the history of such wars. Could we but educate our people on the darker side of this history we would have a guarantee for continued peace that all the peace societies of the world cannot give us. It is the only way to prevent the nation from lightly entering upon war.

Less than twenty years ago public clamor almost forced us into war with a strong nation far better prepared for war than we were and far less vulnerable. The wisest counsels in the Army and the Navy were on the side of peace, since they fully recognized what the appalling cost of such a war would be, a cost immeasurably greater because of our unpreparedness. But it was not this unpreparedness that averted war at that time. We know how lightly many of our people entered into war with a foreign power in 1898. And we know that in a similar state of the public mind, war would have been forced upon an unwilling administration of our government though our antagonist were one of the strongest world powers and not one, as fortunately for us was the case at that time, as unprepared for war as we were.

We of the military recognize this danger. Since we are not in a position to insist upon a continuance of peace, it is a matter of patriotism with us to endeavor to have our country prepared for war. The danger will be always with us until the American people are taught aright the military history of their country. So long as history teaches only a part of the truth, the lessons are lost to them. The American boy grows up to believe that we need not fear to go to war with any nation on earth, and that success must come to us without preparation for the test of war. He has reached this belief through the teachings of a history that has magnified our successes in the past and mini-

mized or passed over our reverses; a history that told nothing of the awful cost of entering upon war unprepared; of the untold suffering and privations that such wars brought to our people. He has seen only the glory of war, and is led to believe that for our country there is no dark side to the picture. And when the boy becomes a man he is ready to clamor for war when in a time of public excitement he mistakes frenzy for patriotism.

Military history of our country, if written and taught aright, must bring home to our people the following facts: That we have never been prepared for war; that unpreparedness has not served to turn our people from war with even the strongest nations; that failing to develop our military resources in time of peace, we have been compelled to squander them ruthlessly when war came; and that the country has paid in every war an appalling cost in blood and treasure. This, despite the fact that we have never yet waged war against a first class military power, except in 1812 when, fortunately for us, our antagonist had her attention diverted from us by the progress of events nearer home. It would teach us, moreover, that undeveloped military resources, no matter how vast, do not fit a nation to wage successful war, any more than the undeveloped material for a football team in a large university would enable it to compete successfully on the gridiron with the highly trained football team of a smaller college.

Military history, to be most profitable to our people, may minimize our successes in past wars if it will; but it must bring out clearly the other side of the picture in order that we may recognize the reasons for our reverses and profit by the mistakes we then made.

In recent years there is a decided improvement in our school histories in that they teach nothing false. The trouble is that while telling the truth they do not tell the whole truth. Let us take the histories of the war of 1812 as an example. No one can learn from them even by inference the facts that in that war our reverses far outnumbered our successes, that in numerous instances our hastily formed volunteers behaved disgracefully and that they proved generally unreliable; or that we enlisted ten men to one that our antagonist could bring against us. That, after all, we did not conquer peace; that the best we can claim for our side is that the issue was undecided; and that had England not had her attention so fully occupied at the time in Europe the issue would surely have been against us—are facts scarcely deducible from many histories of that war.

In recent years the nations that are best prepared for war have given much time and attention to the preparation of critical military histories of the wars in which they have been involved, and have even extended their studies to include the wars of other nations deemed worthy of study. This is now considered of importance secondary only to the work of preparation for possible future wars. It is essentially the work of the general staff of an army, and we are among the very few first class powers that have not taken up the work. The fault of the omission does not lie wholly at the door of our general staff. It is only ten years since the law gave us a general staff. At first its efforts were directed to finding itself, to determining what was its proper sphere, and then to doing all that could be done to make up for the neglect of years in preparing for possible future wars. Just at the time when our general staff might have taken up the critical study of past American campaigns, the reduction in the number of officers assigned to general staff duty

again deferred the work. But our general staff must in the near future assign a section of its best equipped officers to this important work, since it is realized that every day sees the loss of valuable material for research, and that errors once accepted as facts are difficult to eradicate. Moreover, the professional fitness of our officers is best advanced by a study of a correct history of our past campaigns in war. In the meantime our War College is devoting part of its time to a study of the principal campaigns of our Civil War, a study conducted according to the accepted methods of modern historical research. This work is necessarily slow, and it will take years to get in this way a complete history of our campaigns because the War College has other work to do and but one year is allotted to the officers taking the course there. But it has already produced some valuable critical studies of the campaigns of 1861 to 1865, all that we have that are of any real value to us.

Of course much of this work is of technical value only, and is intended to advance the professional knowledge of our officers and not as a history for the public. It is doubtful if the public generally would show any interest in such purely professional studies since the officers who prepared them were not historians in any sense of the word. The professional historian may however, accept the facts brought out in these studies, and weave them into the general history of the time.

Of the four qualifications enumerated by Professor Johnston as necessary for the equipment of the writers of military history, viz., technical knowledge of the military art, erudition, critical skill, and literary skill, two may be looked for among soldiers and two in general among civilians. It may be considered hopeless to expect to find them all combined in any one man. It would seem, then, that our military histories must be written by both soldiers and civilians, since either class alone cannot reach the desired result. There must be collaboration.

We must confess that we are not prepared to say just how we can bring about this result. We hope that this discussion will bring out some practicable working plan. The general staff of the Army will welcome your cooperation in the matter, and the present chief of staff and his assistants stand ready to further, as far as the law will permit, any practicable plan that may be advanced.

We do not come here asking for your assistance in adding a single regiment to our army nor a single battleship to our navy. But we do ask your earnest cooperation in the work of putting before the American people a full and correct military history of our country, one that will bring home the lesson that while war may be a calamity under any circumstances, its cost in blood and treasure is multiplied many times when we enter upon it unprepared.

We believe the education of our people in our military history will be the best guarantee of continued peace when the question rests with them whether there shall be peace or war; and that it will teach the lesson that when war is unavoidable, when it is forced upon us by other nations, or when the life or honor of our country demands it, the only way to minimize its horrors, to bring it to a swift and, for us, favorable conclusion is to be prepared for war. We believe the history of nations for the past century teaches the lesson that the best deterrent against war is adequate preparation for war.

Let me again impress upon you the fact that the Army and the Navy do not stand for war, that they do not want war, and that they have no voice in

bringing about war. War is either forced upon us by other nations or is entered upon by the will of our own people. The danger in the first contingency can be reduced to a minimum or wholly removed by adequate preparation for war in time of peace. In the second contingency, the best way to keep our own people from being carried away by an excess of patriotic fervor, and, in the excitement of the moment, entering upon war lightly, or from entering upon war at all under any conditions except where our national life or honor demands it—is to place before them, and educate them in, a correct military history of our country, one that will give all the truth and be absolutely free from bias or prejudice. Surely this is a work that patriotism demands of us, and one that will do more to bring continued peace to our country than could any work heretofore done or proposed by our peace societies. We even invite the cooperation of such societies, since here is a field wherein we all can work towards the attainment of the same desired end. Educate the people in our military history and then let them decide whether the United States can best ensure peace and reduce the cost and the horrors of war to a minimum by preparation for war in time of peace or by doing away with armies and navies. We of the Army and Navy will confidently leave our case for decision in the hands of a people who know the military history of their country.

THE CHAIRMAN: There is one more regular speaker, who will next be offered. I observe the first vice-president of the American Historical Association here, and I will ask him to take the chair, as I am under bond to preside at a meeting at twelve o'clock. After Major Shelton's paper, there will be a contribution to this meeting by one who speaks by authority. When Colonel Roosevelt was Police Commissioner in New York he had a habit of going about to see where the men were, whether the policemen were standing on post, and I suppose he has dropped in to the War Section this morning to make sure that we are doing our duty. Will Professor Dunning take the chair?

Professor William A. Dunning took the chair

PROFESSOR DUNNING: The first vice-president fails to understand why, when the president is here, he is called upon to take the chair. Perhaps it is because it is customary when the superior is present to have the subordinate do the work.

We will now listen to a paper by Major Shelton of the United States Army.

MAJOR SHELTON said:

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, not so long ago an American woman educator suggested that there be a united effort to destroy all the tin soldiers and the toy cannon that are now among the playthings of our boy youth, on the theory that these things instill into the young the military spirit and the love of war, and that they provoke all the evil consequences of militarism. Now it may be, if war is the mere illusory consequence of an unhealthy mental condition of a people, as some profess to believe, that this suggestion is not without psychological weight. But presuming, for the moment, this view of war correct, it still would seem that there might be danger to us in the literal administration of the suggested remedy, even if as potent as its advocate believed. Wholly to destroy the military spirit and to discourage all thought of war in the youth of this country while the military spirit is still developed elsewhere in the world, and the idea of war, if not encouraged, is at least recognized, might mean our destruction some time in

the future through inability to protect ourselves from aggression. But there is another consideration more closely related to our present subject. Suppose, also for a moment, that war is not an illusion due to a perverted mental state, but, on the contrary, a natural condition of man in his present state of development. Would the destruction of military toys, in which the boy youth seems to find much delight, serve then the purpose planned? Would the destruction of all the dolls in the world, let me ask, kill the spirit of motherhood in the future woman? Dolls do not provoke motherhood; they respond to a natural demand. What if tin soldiers are no different? But these two things, you may say, are not to be compared, and, saying this, you may, of course, be right, but also you may be wrong; for I hold that there is no one yet that has proved or even attempted to prove that these things do not come from exactly the same cause—the mere struggle for existence. No one pretends to deny continued necessity for this struggle on the part of the individual. The man driven to hunger, no matter what his moral training or his moral strength, will even commit crime to appease his appetite—which is one reason for the continued existence of police. Are we sure yet that we can properly deny that the same instinct works in men collectively? Unless we be, there is reason for the continued existence of armies. Nations are men collectively, as well as men divided. The starving nation may struggle, may even commit international crime, to avoid what seems worse. It is a common argument of those who hope for the passing of war that the poverty of a nation must serve to prevent it entering upon war. Those who employ this argument are ignorant of history. Are the Balkan allies in Europe now among the wealthy nations of the world? Where in the world's money markets could they have borrowed money for war six months ago? Can anybody believe that it would not be easier for them to borrow money now to continue war than it would have been to borrow but a few months ago to begin war? Was Japan, in 1903, wealthy as nations go? Were the Boers nationally wealthy when they fought England? Was Spain wealthy in 1898? Was Prussia wealthy in 1866 when she could not borrow money at ten per cent? Was she wealthy when she faced France four years later? Yet would anyone have suggested ten per cent interest to Prussia after Metz? Search the past and the same questions and the same answers stare out from every corner. The world little likes the oppression of the poor by the rich—even though it is slow to prevent oppression. It little likes aggression by rich nations. But it applauds always successful resistance whether by the individual or the nation. Is this anything less than recognition of the moral right, if not the necessity, of both to struggle for existence?

Now, if I am correct in my judgment that no one has undertaken seriously to establish any difference between tin soldiers and wax dolls, it seems to me a very singular fact. For whatever may be the purpose of the future, war has been a factor of world development since the beginning of recorded time. Not only this, but it has been by far the most important factor. Most of the records of the world's history are accounts of the world's wars.

It is a common thing now to decry war as an unnecessary evil; yet if war is an unnecessary evil to-day, it must always have been an unnecessary evil. Probably those who believe it both unnecessary and evil to-day believe the same thing of it in the past. But no one has so proved it nor attempted so to prove it. No one, in short, has studied war in the abstract sufficiently to be able to declare convincingly whether or not war as a factor in world develop-

ment has meant on the whole evil or good. I am not here to plead the cause of war; but it seems to me if I am correct in this that there is a tempting field still open to the investigator.

Not so many years ago I read with interest in the public press the report that a well known American educator was to devote the remainder of his life to study in this field. Judging by the fragmentary comment that has come from him through the press since, the report was wrong. Judged in this way it would seem only that, convinced before beginning his study that war has been an evil, he is concerned now only with reiterating his conviction. The field of research to which I have referred is never to be covered by prejudice and is never to be covered at all by anyone unwilling to give, if necessary, the entire working period of his life to research, criticism, and logical deduction before he gives his conclusions to the world.

All this may seem aside from the subject of this conference. Yet it is not aside; it is directly and closely related. For it is certain that we can know accurately little of what war has meant in our own national life until we have some knowledge of what war has meant in world development. And there is an even more important connection. Those who decry war as unnecessary under all circumstances are believers in peace under all circumstances. Those who believe that the military spirit can be killed by the destruction of toy soldiers believe that peace, like war, is the simple result of a state of mind. The patriotic fervor which sweeps a whole people into defense of its hearthstones must then be made impossible. But to do this something more than soldiers of tin, even soldiers of flesh and blood, must be got rid of. The soldiers of history must be forgot. In other words, if we follow arguments of this kind to their logical conclusion, and we may find plenty of them to follow in the utterance of many earnest advocates of the cause of peace, is it not clear that they rest for admission upon the denial, or, at least, upon the suppression of the facts of history? It is not worth while to inquire now whether the facts of history can be permanently suppressed, so long as there remains the possibility of their discovery; but it is within our province, I think, to ask whether the advocates of any cause who fear the truth can hope ever to win, or, indeed, ever to do their cause anything but harm? Certainly those who hope for the day of universal peace can do nothing more likely to postpone it than to oppose the accurate recording of the days of war.

In our purpose now to seek the means whereby an accurate record of our own war history may be assured, it would seem then that, first of all, we should have supporting us every earnest advocate of peace. I hope we may; but my experience so far has given me little ground for expectation. It is unfortunate, but true, that earnestness and love of peace do not always betoken wisdom. Outside of this class, which ought to be wholly with us, but which will in fact be divided, and possibly quite largely in opposition, there are, so far as I can see, but two classes of our people likely to take active interest in our present endeavor. The first of these is composed of historians, historical students, and those interested in one way or another in historical research. I take it that this class is finely represented by the Association under whose auspices this conference is assembled. But the interest of this class, speaking generally, is indirect, lying as it must simply in the broad purpose of attaining historical truth and avoiding permanent record of historical error. But this purpose alone should be sufficient to induce both sympathy and assistance;

and before we go far I think it will be found that both are needed. The other and last class is the military services of our country and those interested with them in developing an efficient military system. Please mark that I do not say an efficient army and navy, but an efficient military system, a thing that this country has never had, but which, good or bad, with us must include much more than the few active forces ordinarily maintained.

Yet this system has a history antedating the history of the nation, a history worked out at much cost in American lives and dollars, which no one yet has had the courage or the knowledge accurately to record. And the history of this system is the military history of this country. Where in war lives have been unnecessarily expended or dollars wasted in military extravagance it has been due to its faults. Where there has been real success in war it has been due to its virtues. But the trouble is that few of us realize all the waste and extravagance, and fewer still probably where our real successes have lain, or how much counted as success has in truth been failure. And we never shall know these things until we have an accurate record of our military history; and we never shall be able to create an efficient military system until this record has not merely been made available but has been studied and our military system established in accordance with the principles deduced therefrom.

Count me wholly selfish then, if need be, in confessing a greater interest now in the development of an efficient military system than in pure historical truths. Yet while counting me thus and making due allowance for corresponding prejudices, admit also, as I think you must, that the record of historical truths is not an end of itself, but a means to judgment of, and better preparation for, the future. Admitting this, I think we shall find ourselves not far apart.

From this you may judge that it is less a question with me concerning who shall write our military history than whether our military history shall be written. It may be said truthfully enough that the military history of the world has never been written—accurately—and this, notwithstanding that perhaps nine lines out of every ten recounting what purports to be the history of the old world are concerned with the deeds of war. It would be no less our duty to recount our own history accurately, if possible, were there nothing preceding it. Our national history, as history goes, covers a brief period of world time, but a period during which the arts familiar to us had early reached a stage where accurate account of all that has occurred ought to be the easiest of all records in the world to put in form. And yet I doubt, if the commonly accepted beliefs of much of our national history be taken as a criterion, whether our history is any more accurately recorded than the history of ancient Greece and Rome. There can be but one reason for this. And this reason lies in the failure accurately to record, not our deeds in peace, but our deeds in war; since, notwithstanding the comparative brevity of our national life and the longer periods of peace intervening between wars, still war in its inception, its progress, and its results has made up by far the larger part of our history, as it has of every other history in the world.

The question, indeed, is not who shall write our military history but who can write it. So far, speaking generally, it has been written by the civilian. It is no criticism of the many fine accounts of detached military events that are a part of our literature to say that the civilian has failed in his task, if, indeed, he ever consciously undertook it. These accounts are of undoubted value,

but they are of value not as military history but as sources of military history. On the other hand, it may be urged that since practically all that has been produced in the way of military history has been written by civilians, it follows that the military man can produce nothing, or, at least, nothing better. But this conclusion does not in fact follow. There has been so far no means by which our military history could be produced by men of military training. It is to find this means that we are seeking your assistance now.

Again, it may be said that in the brief text-books of history which are all that the student in general can be expected to peruse, it is impossible to record more than the bare facts, and since the details must be omitted, it matters not whether the writer has technical knowledge of the military art or not. This is true provided that there be available stores of exact information and reasoned deductions from which the historical writer untrained in the military art can draw the facts to be recorded in histories of this kind. But where are those stores now? They do not exist. And the point I would like to make is that they cannot be brought into existence until some one not merely trained in modern historical methods, but acquainted with the technicalities of the military art, has given the best there is in him to their production. In other words, our military history, if it is ever to be correctly written, either for the military or the civilian student, must be first prepared by the militarily trained historian alone, or by the militarily trained historian in collaboration with the untrained civilian.

Germany and France have, speaking in a large sense, recorded their military histories through the agency of a section of their general staffs. It is true that these histories have not escaped criticism. No history does, and probably no history should escape criticism. The best history is but an approximation of the truth. But it is also true that the general staff histories of Germany and France have not escaped the serious criticism of suppression of facts and false deduction. Moreover, this criticism is undoubtedly just and it is all the more serious, since the suppression and false deduction were undoubtedly purposely made. There should be nothing but condemnation for this course, which, through its very failure to accomplish its purpose, has condemned itself. But the "official" histories need not be wholly outlawed on this account. Historical error purposely made may be worse morally than unintentional error, but the difference in results may favor the intended error, since it is almost certain to be discovered and disclosed. Furthermore, the incentive to greater accuracy in unofficial histories, as well as the new sources of information afforded through the official accounts, is not to be neglected. But there is another object to be attained. War everywhere, of course, is conducted on much the same lines. It is the oldest of man's games. It is played by teams trained in much the same way. The rules are the same the world over. Yet no nation can blindly copy the methods of another in war and hope for success. War brings out the deepest there is in us, in the individual and in the nation. If there is anything of national unity, national thought, or national spirit, it appears in war. It is for this reason that military nations turn their attention to discovering what this national thing is that brings them victory and prevents defeat, and discovering this they write its principles into a doctrine which they endeavor to instill into the hearts and minds of their armies, and with which, so far as possible, to inspire the whole body politic. But it is even more important with us, without an army in any large sense and

dependent upon the creation of armies after war is upon us, to learn what it is that has actuated the conduct of our troops and our people in the past, and to put the principles of this conduct into a consistent theory that may become an American doctrine of war. But this is only to be discovered through close study of our history and only to be formulated by men militarily trained.

Since generally where a nation's military history has been recorded and a doctine of war formulated, it has been the work of its general staff, it at least seems likely that if our military history is ever to be recorded and a consistent theory of war evolved, it must be done by the same agency. This in no sense denies the vast aid that civilian individuals or associations may render in this work; but it does deny that civilians, untrained militarily, either alone or combined, can ever write our military history in a manner conducive to the greatest good. The foundation of a general staff properly constituted is its historical section. It may well be said, then, that our general staff is not properly constituted inasmuch as it has within its organization as yet no such section. And very promptly I shall admit this truth. Our general staff has been in existence now for nearly a dozen years. It has never yet met the expectations its friends built upon its organization, and it may not meet them for long years to come. It has rarely been understood by the public, the press, or the politicians. It has been freely criticized and undoubtedly it has made some enemies. As an organization it is still imperfect. But the general staff has had many difficulties to contend against. It has had indeed unfortunately to struggle throughout largely for its own existence. Yet, notwithstanding the ignorance, bigotry, and selfishness against which it has contended, notwithstanding the imperfection of its organization, it still represents in its creation the greatest step forward ever taken in our military development, and its accomplishments even in the brief period of its existence mean more for development and efficiency in the future than all the military legislation that was put upon the statute books during the whole of our preceding national existence. Notwithstanding its enemies and its unpopularity in quarters where it should receive support, I have full faith in its capacity to work its way and our way out of the difficulties confronting us. Nevertheless, I confess freely to disappointment over its failure to establish some sort of an historical section at the outset and to still deeper disappointment over its continued failure to establish such a section thereafter. For I do not believe until such a section is a part of the general staff, until, indeed, it is its very foundation, that this body can fulfil in any reasonable measure the functions properly pertaining to it. It is of course true that as now organized, such a section, even if established, could not hope to attain real success. This is not merely because the general staff is not large enough to meet the present demands upon it, not even because during the last session of Congress it was unfortunately reduced in number. The writing of our military history is its most important work, and if to do it other important work must be neglected, it should still not hesitate. Had the general staff but two men within its organization, I believe that one of them should be constituted into an historical section. The real difficulty lies deeper. The general staff as now organized is composed of officers detailed for tours of four years therewith. Frequently in practise these periods are much shorter. It would be impossible to attempt seriously the research and criticism and study essential to completing any part of our military history by a continually

changing group of men such as this. In other words, the establishment of a section of the general staff likely fully to meet our needs in this respect is dependent upon legislation that will give to this part greater freedom in the selection of its members and indefinite tenure of office to those assigned to it. I believe, personally, that legislation should go much further and should give to this section of the general staff authority to add civilian historians to its working membership, to collaborate with civilian writers in the work of production, and to purchase the product, when desirable, of civilian workers in the same field. The qualities required by the writer of military history, as has been well shown here, are such as are rarely wholly given either to the soldier or to the civilian. Nevertheless there are civilians capable of acquiring much intimate knowledge of the technicalities of the military art, just as there are soldiers capable of acquiring considerable erudition and some of the literary graces. Moreover, it happens not infrequently in military life that officers acquiring much technical knowledge in their younger days are forced through physical infirmities from the active pursuit of their profession. Qualities of mind are not always lost through the physical infirmities that prevent active service, and there is little doubt that, given the authority, the general staff could develop a section composed of active officers when fitted for this work, of retired officers who could develop at least some of the required qualities, and of civilian collaborators and co-workers, which section I think would come in time to meet every necessity of the case.

Moreover, the general staff would have certain advantages which civilians, alone or in combination, could not hope to secure. It would have not only the libraries of the War Department and the War College, probably the best technical collections available in this country, the technical studies of the War College classes, and the means for more readily performing the cartographic work and the press work, but it would have also the great advantage of immediate access to the archives of the War Department, which hold all there is of the official records of our military history.

It seems to me, then, that on all accounts our start in the right direction lies through the general staff. Shall we not then frankly face the conditions as they are and do what we can, in spite of the opposition to the general staff, laid in ignorance, to make a start in this field in the right direction? I believe that the encouragement of this Association can do much to help us now in a time of serious need, that it can do much in the cause of national historical truth, much toward the creation of a sound military system, and much in the cause of peace, and believing this, so far as I can speak for the department I informally represent, I commit our case very gladly into your hands.

Professor Dunning: The subject of this conference must appeal very strongly to one who is president of the American Historical Association and who has been commander in chief of the American Army. Will Colonel Roosevelt address the conference?

Colonel Roosevelt said:

When Professor Johnston and Major Shelton asked me to come to this session I hesitated because I do not know that you are willing to hear just the things that I think you ought to hear in connection with our military history and the lessons to be learned from our military history. In essence, I have only to say "ditto" to the two gentlemen whose papers I have heard read

since entering this room. But there are two or three things referred to by them on which I would like to lay additional emphasis. I don't believe it is possible to treat military history as something entirely apart from the general national history. I will go a little further than that: I think it is utterly idle to try to understand the German victories in 1866 and 1870 unless you study the German history from the time when Stein and Scharnhorst began the reforms until those reforms reached their culmination under Ruhl and Moltke. I don't think that any study of the last sixty days' military operations in the Balkans would help you to understand what was done if you didn't study carefully the history of the Balkan people for at least a generation previous to this war that we have seen going on before our eyes. I am perfectly clear that the military history must be written primarily—not entirely, but primarily—by military men, and for that reason I have felt that it should be written under the observation of the general staff, but I feel that there should be the collaboration of civilians with the military writers, and if those civilian writers are of the proper type some of the most important lessons will be taught by them, and they will be among the most important lessons because they will be lessons that the military man can't with propriety teach. They will be criticisms of the American government and the American people. I don't wish to see the military history written by the general staff alone, because the general staff can't with propriety tell the whole truth about the government and about the people to the government and to the people. For instance, any history of the Spanish war to be of the slightest value to our people in the future would have to deal for two-thirds at least with the utter lack of preparation of the American nation before it went into that war, and it would have to deal not with the faults of the Army but with the faults of a civilian administration of a previous generation and deal with those faults as committed not by wicked people in office on their own initiative, but because the American people hadn't waked up to the need of preparation, to the need of having whatever forces they did have efficient.

Infinitely more than a mere military question, a question of strategy or tactics, is involved in the proper military history of the United States. The attitude of the people must be corrected. If the Bulgarians had for twenty-five years been taught that questions of national honor and vital interest could be arbitrated and had believed such teachings, you couldn't have called a Bulgarian army together that could have fought—you couldn't have made them fight. If you teach a soldier that he can arbitrate a slap in the face, you have got a soldier that you can't trust to fight; and if you teach a nation so that it really believes it can arbitrate a question of national honor or vital interest you have got a nation that won't fight. And there is another side: If you teach a nation that it can promise to arbitrate and break its promise, you are reaching it a bad lesson. If you teach a nation that to please ten or fifteen per cent of its people it can agree to arbitrate, make a promise to arbitrate a matter, with the certainty that it will repudiate that promise the instant that fifteen or twenty per cent of the people wish it repudiated, you have entered upon a bad career from the national standpoint. And you can't act that way, you can't distort the national spirit, weaken the national sense of honor, without reacting to some degree upon its army.

A proper history of the Army must in part be written by the right type of civilian, because it must deal with our national shortcomings, not only govern-

mental, but popular, and point out truthfully what those national shortcomings have cost us in the past when war came upon us. I very seriously doubt if there is any man in this country more genuinely an advocate of peace than I am; because if there was a war either I would go to it or my sons would go to it—that is, a serious war, not one of our police businesses—and I don't want to go to war, and I don't want my sons to go; so I have every personal interest in making as strong a plea for peace as any man can. But I know my fellow countrymen, and I know that no matter what general resolutions they came to in advance, no matter what the lack of preparations, they would go to war on the drop of a hat if ever the national honor or the national interest was seriously jeopardized.

The way to prevent the possibility therefore is to keep ourselves, our whole military system, the Army and Navy as part of the whole military system, in such a condition that there won't be any temptation on the part of anyone else to go to war with us. You can't do that unless you make our people wake up to the real meaning of our past history. The immediate past I suppose can hardly be written of sufficiently dispassionately, because to write it truthfully you would have to give great offense to so many good people, who simply happened unfortunately to be in positions where anyone would have done badly under the existing conditions, and who therefore did badly; and it would be hard upon them to hold them up to scorn or obloquy for what really wasn't their fault. In consequence it would be a very difficult thing to teach the lessons of history from what has occurred while the men who did the deeds are still living.

I shan't speak of the Civil War, but I shall speak of that little war, the Spanish war, in which I was. I was Assistant Secretary of the Navy at the outbreak of that war; it was part of my duty to help in making preparations during the three months intervening between the blowing up of the Maine and the actual going to war. My experiences would have been comic if they hadn't been fraught with such tragedy. If I should ever write a history of that war I would have to write very harshly of many high officers of the Army and the Navy, especially the Army, gentlemen. The defects, for very obvious reasons, were much greater among the higher officers of the Army than among the higher officers of the Navy, and I should have to write with great harshness of the governmental system that had permitted those faults to grow up. It wasn't the fault of the officers of the Army and Navy; it was the fault of our system of the preceding thirty years. And I wish I could convey to you vividly an idea of the panic that prevailed along sections of the Atlantic coast. You ought to recollect it, some of you, yourselves. I don't know whether you do or not, but the panic that prevailed along sections of the Atlantic coast at the time of the outbreak of the war with Spain was very real. There was immense pressure, for instance, through Congress, through representatives responding to the people behind them, to take the Navy and distribute it on the fine strategic plan of anchoring one vessel off each port down the seacoast, so as to insure even the Spanish picking it up in detail.

I don't want to give names, but I had these two or three experiences: Two very prominent members of Congress, one of the two or three leading members of the Lower House and one of the two or three leading members of the Senate, after having sufficiently bedevilled President McKinley, were shunted by him off on me with instructions to gratify them if I possibly could. They demanded a vessel to protect the harbor of the city in which they both lived. They were

both very important members of the Congress and it was very difficult to do anything without their aid. I was told by the President to try to get them a vessel; their city demanded it. I got them a vessel; it was a Civil War monitor; it was armed with one smooth-bore gun about as effective as a culverin; it was manned by twenty-one naval militia, and it was towed by a tug. I sent it out there to that port and it completely satisfied them, completely satisfied those two statesmen, and that city. It was quite unfit to deal with any foe of modern times, although it might possibly have dealt with the Spanish Armada, though I am not sure. It was preposterous as an instrument of defense against any modern opponent, but it met the moral needs of the situation.

I had one request to send a monitor down to anchor off Jekyl Island. Now that seems an absurdity, but I was pressed to do it. I had quite an influential lady, the wife of an influential man, spend about half an hour of my time one day in beseeching me for a warship of some kind to be anchored in the neighborhood of the big summer hotel where she and her friends lived.

Now I am giving you actual experiences. You people who live here in Boston will remember that a great many of your business men sent their securities up to the safe deposits in Worcester, and there was even a proposal not to allow the national guard of Massachusetts to go outside of Massachusetts so that it should be ready to protect Massachusetts from the imminent Spanish invasion. All those things happened right before our eyes. New York Harbor was strewn with torpedoes enough to have impeded all traffic, but for the fact that they wouldn't go off. So that we were freed from that danger.

In dealing with the Army and the Navy at that time I found that the Navy had this very great advantage over the Army—the higher officers of the Navy had been obliged to practise eighty per cent of their profession as it would have been practised in time of war. A battleship going to sea is taken under service conditions necessarily. There wasn't a colonel in our Army who had a regi ment which he took into the field under service conditions. A squadron of battleships at sea is necessarily maneuvered under service conditions, nearly ninety per cent of service conditions—there wasn't the actual firing at that time that there is now, but almost ninety per cent of service conditions. But there was not a brigade commander, let alone a division commander, in our Army who had seen a brigade or taken part in marching a brigade under service conditions since the Civil War. The men who were with our army in Santiago, the generals, the corps commanders, the division commanders, the brigade commanders, were men who had been gallant second lieutenants thirty odd years before in the Civil War, while for a few years afterwards a certain number of them had had experience in Indian fighting, but who for over a quarter of a century had served in posts where there was one company or half a company and where the all-absorbing military question was the fight between the captain and the quartermaster as to how high to shave a mule's tail.

Now, you gentlemen of the Army, from your experience, can corroborate what I am saying. That was the training which the higher officers of the little American Army had had.

Of the summer when we ambled down to attack Santiago, do you remember what Mr. Dooley said? Mr. Dooley is a profound philosopher. He said that in the Spanish war we were in a dream but the Spaniards were in a trance. Now we can't always count upon our foes being in a trance.

In getting my regiment equipped I was very, very much helped by Secretary

Alger—I shall always remember the way he helped me by cutting the red tape that had to be cut. There were certain bureau officials there also who helped me materially; for instance, Jack Weston—Jack Weston did everything he could to help us. But most of those worthy, high-minded heads of bureaus in the War Department were old gentlemen who were wholly unable to understand what modern warfare conditions meant. For instance, I had to make a fight on this point: I was equipping my regiment, and it was near the time of the July issue of clothing. In July they issued the clothing for the following winter. Well, I had to fight all I knew how to prevent them issuing the winter clothing for a tropic campaign in midsummer. Now, you gentlemen of the Army know that that is the kind of thing you are up against when you are dealing with the perfectly nice, high-minded bureau man.

I was bound to get brigaded with regulars. We were bound to get the Krag-Jorgensen, smokeless powder rifles. The head of a department, a fine old boy, did his best to get me to take black powder. He said the other was an experiment and, after all, black powder would hide us from the enemy.

One particular bureau chief I had this experience with: I had made a demand upon him and he pointed out to me the regulations and why I couldn't have, for instance, horses or wagons. They had to advertise thirty days for their horses—in which case we would have gone on foot—and they had to have the wagons built, and that would have taken three to four months, and so forth and so on. In a case like that I would go down and get Alger to override it and come back. Well, for about the fourth time he looked at the requisition I presented and said, "All right, you can have it, you can have it," and he sank back into a chair and added: "Oh, dear! I had this bureau running in such good shape and along came a war!" He treated the war as an illegitimate interruption to the activities of the War Department. It was most natural that he should have done so, for the only way that a secretary of war for the preceding thirty years could make a reputation was by economies; and the only way he could economize without breeding hostility locally was to economize as regards the efficiency of the Army under service conditions in the future, and that was the way he did it.

In consequence, when the Army went down to Santiago—I am speaking generally—the Army itself had excellent material in the ranks, notably among the non-commissioned officers; about fifty per cent were recruits, but the others carried them along; the non-commissioned officers were excellent; the junior officers of the line were excellent—there were exceptions in both cases, of course; but when you got above the rank of captain, even in the line, they were generally markedly inferior in their profession to the corresponding men of the Navy, not because they were not the same men, since they were the same men, but because they had been for thirty years deprived of every chance of practising their profession. Thirty years! You take any railroad president of to-day and omit the thirty years just before he became president and leave him only the practical training of the few years before that when he was a $1,600 clerk at the outside, and how much of a railroad president would he make? He couldn't do anything. That is what happened in our Army.

Now I don't suppose that you can get the full and accurate history written of an event so close as the Spanish war. If you tried to do it, I doubt very much if you would produce the right effect, because there would be the able and industrious and persistent effort to misrepresent what was written, and the effect upon the people might be the direct reverse of the effect you want

to produce. But we can write about, say, the war of 1812; that is far enough away to permit us to write about it truthfully. You can get a full statement of just what we did in that war. Such a statement ought to show the very extraordinary feats of valor and tactical efficiency of the small units among the regular forces, among the frigates and sloops, and we have every reason to be very proud of what they did. They did what no navy of any European power in the preceding twenty-five years had been able to do, that is, more than hold their own with the English frigates and sloops. We captured a greater number of ships in single fight from the English than all the nations of Europe combined had captured from them in single fight for the preceding twenty-five years; a fine thing, an excellent thing! On the Niagara frontier, after two years of humiliations, it was utterly preposterous the way we developed the Regular Army, which under Scott and old Jacob Brown did what the best troops of France had been unable to do under their best marshals, that is, meet on equal terms the British regulars in the open. At the battle of the Thames there was one very noteworthy incident, the charge of the mounted riflemen under Johnson, and their use then as dismounted riflemen in a way that was not done in any European war at that time, and which prefigured what was actually done in the Civil War. And it was a very great triumph of Andrew Jackson and his volunteers at New Orleans, a very great triumph. Now, all of those things should be shown. It should also be shown that we, a nation of some seven million people at that time, proved unable to get into the field an army competent to do any serious offensive work. It should be shown that our failure to get ourselves any kind of an adequate navy resulted in such widespread pressure upon our Congress as to produce a strong secession movement in the northeast, pressure that resulted in a very small English force keeping the whole Atlantic seaboard in a condition of panic and landing and destroying the national capitol after the resistance at Bladensburg, which it seems almost incredible to read of and to think that the men who ran at Bladensburg were the sons of the victors of Yorktown and the fathers of the men who fought at Gettysburg. It seems incredible that we should have failed when Washington was taken. The war had then been going on three years and yet we hadn't the good sense to develop even a small regular army at that time. Now the lessons to be learned from our failures are clear. The prime lesson to be learned from the war of 1812 is that it is too late to prepare for war when war has begun. The next lesson to be learned—and it is a very, very old lesson—is that all talk of a merely defensive war means simply to invite disaster. There is only one effective defense, and that is the offensive. There is only one way to win a fight and that is by hitting and not by parrying. We had proceeded for years before 1812 on the theory that, as has been said by one of our presidents, peace was our passion—and we showed it. It was a passion that wasn't shared by other people, and we paid the penalty for having it our passion when it wasn't shared by other people. There had been a little navy and we laid it up; we didn't have any regular army at all. We started to begin with "the nation in arms"—that was an equivalent expression at the time to "our gallant volunteers." We got 4,000 men of my own state at Queenstown at the beginning of the war; there was a force of a thousand mixed troops on the other side, under a very competent general named Brock. Our 4,000 militia got together; 1,000 were ferried across and were attacked. As soon as the noise of the fight came across the river the remaining 3,000 men took refuge in a plea that the Constitution was being violated; they appealed

to the Constitution in the true spirit of those who appeal to it for the purpose of shielding their own inefficiency. They had a mass meeting on the field and decided that there was no constitutional authority to take them outside of the borders of the United States, and with that belated reverence for the Constitution working in them they declined to go across to the assistance of the thousand men who were on the other side of the Niagara, all of whom were either killed or captured. A similar or rather worse incident occurred—well, not worse, because there is no comparative to a superlative—but as bad an incident occurred in the surrender of Detroit, and the Bladensburg business was not much better.

The little handful of frigates and sloops which had been built some fourteen years before did admirably. If we had had fifteen ships of the line as efficient, not only individually but as a fleet, as the *Constitution* and *Constellation*, as the *Hornet* and the *Wasp*, there would have been no war and we would have been treated with profound politeness by both England and France. Our people—and I don't think you can blame the people, because you couldn't expect them to realize how things were—but our people believed that instead of battleships, instead of an army, you could rely upon an attachment to peace and such measures as an embargo, a "peaceful war," as it was called; and in consequence we had to pay in life and in treasure immensely during nearly three years of warfare, and we had to come within a measurable distance of a great disaster to the union, and all because we didn't prepare in advance and because as a nation we believed that our being peaceful in a world that was not peaceful would save us from war instead of provoking war.

Now, gentlemen, I believe most emphatically that we ought to have a proper history of the United States Army, a proper military history of the United States. I believe it must be part of the general history of the United States, so far as that general history is concerned with the attitude of the nation towards things military. I believe it should be written by the general staff, but that it should be written in collaboration with civilians who can write with knowledge and frankness of those matters which it is impossible to expect even a good military man who is a historian to write of with knowledge and frankness. And I believe that it will be worse than useless if it doesn't tell the exact truth, if it doesn't tell our disasters and shortcomings just as well as our triumphs, because we shall have to learn from those disasters just as much as from our triumphs.

Gentlemen, I thank you.

The following resolutions were adopted by the conference:

That in the opinion of this conference military history should be pursued in a more systematic way; that a committee of five be appointed by the chair to consider the best method of furthering the study and presentation of military history and of bringing into common action professional and civilian students.

That this committee have authority to call a further conference at such time and place as they may think suitable, and report their conclusions to that conference; that the American Historical Association be asked to appoint a special committee to cooperate with the committee above constituted.

Professor Dunning announced the following committee in accordance with the resolution adopted: Professor R. M. Johnston, *Chairman*; Professor Fred M. Fling, Colonel T. L. Livermore, Major J. W. McAndrew, and Major George H. Shelton.

The conference then adjourned.

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